## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS EL PASO DIVISION

ANNA BARNES,	)
Plaintiff,	)
v.	) Cause No.: 3:22-CV-00161-KC
CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS;	)
GREGORY K. ALLEN, Individually;	)
OLIVER K. MEISE, Individually; and	)
JARRED R. FRANK, Individually,	)
Defendants.	) )

## DEFENDANT THE CITY OF EL PASO AND GREGORY K. ALLEN'S FIRST AMENDED RULE 12(b)(6) MOTION TO DISMISS PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

TO THE HONORABLE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE:

COMES NOW Defendants the CITY OF EL PASO, ("City") and GREGORY K. ALLEN ("Allen"), and file their First Amended Motion to Dismiss Plaintiffs First Amended Original Complaint pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), because Plaintiff has failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted the City and Allen are entitled to dismissal as to Plaintiff's claims. In support, the Movants shows as follows:

## I. <u>BACKGROUND</u>

1. Plaintiff filed her Complaint on or about May 5, 2022. ("Complaint" ECF 1). On August 2, 2022, a Summons and a copy of the Complaint were served upon Mayor Oscar Leeser on behalf of the City. On August 3, 2022, a Summons and a copy of the Complaint were served upon Chief Gregory Allen. On September 13, 2022, Plaintiff filed her First Amended ("Amended Complaint"

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ECF 18). The City and Allen's Motion to Dismiss is being filed timely pursuant to the Federal

Rules of Civil Procedure.

2. Plaintiff's claims revolve around an incident that occurred on August 27, 2021. Amd.

Compl. ¶ 16. Plaintiff states she and her children went to *Urban Air Venture Park* to celebrate her

daughter's birthday. Amd. Compl. ¶ 16. Plaintiff and her children left the establishment at around

10 p.m. Amd. Compl. ¶ 18. As she was driving Plaintiff alleges she was burnt by ash from her

cigarette and accidentally struck a curb and a small sapling. Amd. Compl. ¶ 19-20. Plaintiff states

no one was injured in the collision. Amd. Compl. ¶ 22.

3. Officers Meise and Frank of the City of El Paso Police Department ("EPPD") arrived on

scene soon after the collision. Amd. Compl. ¶ 24. Plaintiff alleges she was advised she was going

to be arrested for the offense of Driving While Intoxicated with child passenger. Amd. Compl. ¶

27. Plaintiff states she was not asked to perform any standardized field sobriety tests, further,

Plaintiff denies being intoxicated. Amd. Compl. ¶ 27.

4. Plaintiff alleges Officer Frank used a leg sweep on her legs causing her to fall and strike the

ground. Amd. Compl. ¶ 29. Plaintiff denies that she was resisting arrest. Amd. Compl. ¶ 29.

Plaintiff states she was handcuffed and sat on the curb. Amd. Compl. ¶ 29. Plaintiff alleges she was

then struck in the face by Officer Frank multiple times. Amd. Compl. ¶ 30. Plaintiff alleges Officer

Meise was assisting Officer Frank by holding her shoulder as Frank struck her. Amd. Compl. ¶ 30.

Plaintiff was then transported to the hospital in an ambulance. Amd. Compl. ¶ 32-33.

5. Plaintiff brings claims against the City of El Paso, Chief Gregory K. Allen and the two

involved officers alleging civil rights violations under 42 U.S.C. §1983. In addition, Plaintiff brings

Monell claims against the City of El Paso.

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II. ARGUMENT AND AUTHORITIES

A. Plaintiff Has Not Plead Any Facts that the City or Allen Maintained a Policy or

**Custom of Excessive Force.** 

6. City respectfully asks this Honorable Court to dismiss Plaintiff's claims where the

complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6); see

also Gregson v. Zurich Am. Ins. Co., 322 F.3d 883 (5th Cir. 2003). A motion to dismiss under Rule

12(b)(6) tests the legal sufficiency of the claims stated in the complaint and must be evaluated solely

on the basis of the pleadings. Jackson v. Procunier, 789 F.2d 307, 309 (5th Cir. 1986); Morin v.

Caire, 77 F.3d 116, 120 (5th Cir. 1996).

7. A municipality can only be held liable under §1983 if the Plaintiff proves each of the

following essential elements: (1) a violation of a recognized, constitutionally protected right,

resulting from (2) a municipal policy or custom, (3) promulgated by a policy-maker that, (4) through

its deliberate indifferent implementation, (5) is the "moving force" or direct cause of the alleged

injury. Monell v. Dep't of Social Services of City of New York, 436 U.S. 658, 694 (1978); Board of

the County Commissioners of Bryan County, Oklahoma v. Brown, 520 U.S. 397, 404 (1997);

McKinney v. Irving Indep. School Dist., 309 F.3d 308, 312 (5th Cir. 2002). Simply stated, the

Plaintiff must identify the policy or custom, connect the policy or custom to the City itself and show

that her injury was incurred because of the application of that specific policy or custom. Bennett v.

City of Slidell, 728 F.2d 762, 767 (5th Cir. 1984). Liability must rest on official policy or custom,

meaning the city government's policy or custom, and not the policy or custom of an individual

official. Id. at 769. A municipality may be liable for constitutional violations under 42 U.S.C.

§1983, but there is no respondeat superior liability. Monell, 436 U.S. at 694. Lastly, a municipality

is almost never liable for an isolated unconstitutional act on the part of an employee; it is liable only

for acts directly attributable to it "through some official action or imprimatur." Piotrowski v. City

of Houston, 237 F.3d 567, 578 (5th Cir. 2001).

There are two primary considerations for a court's analysis of the propriety of dismissal 8.

under Rule 12(b)(6), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. First, the allegations contained in the

complaint are to be construed in the Plaintiff's favor, and all well-pleaded facts in the complaint

are accepted as true. Baker v. Putnal, 75 F.3d 190, 196 (5th Cir. 1996). Conclusory allegations in

the complaint, however, shall not be accepted as true. Kaiser Aluminum & Chem. Sales, Inc. v.

Avondale Shipyards, Inc., 677 F.2d 1045, 1050 (5th Cir. 1982). Conclusory allegations, legal

conclusions masquerading as factual conclusions or unwarranted deduction of facts, are not

accepted as true, and are not adequate to prevent dismissal. Fernandez-Montes v. Allied Pilots

Ass'n, 987 F.2d 278, 284 (5th Cir. 1993); Great Plains Trust Co. v. Morgan Stanley Dean Witter

& Co., 313 F.3d 305, 313 (5th Cir. 2002). Second, a Plaintiff must plead "enough facts to state a

claim to relief that is plausible on its face." Elsensohn v. St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office. 530

F.3d 368, 372 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2008). "Factual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above

the speculative level, on the assumption that all allegations in the complaint are true." Bell Atlantic

Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007); Cuvillier v. Sullivan, 503 F.3d 397, 401 (5th Cir.

2007). If a Plaintiff fails to allege facts in a pleading that are sufficient to nudge the claims across

the line from conceivable to plausible, the complaint must be dismissed. *Id.* at 570.

9. "[T]he tenet that a court must accept a complaint's allegations as true is inapplicable to

threadbare recitals of a cause of action's elements, supported by mere conclusory statements."

Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 663 (2009). The grounds for relief require "more than labels and

conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do." Twombly,

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550 U.S. at 555, citing Papasan v. Allain, 478 U.S. 265, 286 (1986). [O]nly a complaint that states

a plausible claim for relief survives a motion to dismiss. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678; *Twombly*, 550 U.S.

at 556. But where the well-pleaded facts do not permit the court to infer more than the mere

possibility of misconduct, the complaint has alleged-but it has not "show[n]"- "that the pleader is

entitled to relief." *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 citing Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2).

10. Plaintiff does not cite to a written policy to support her claim for municipal liability for

excessive use of force. Instead she argues that the City has a "persistent and widespread practice of

officers using excessive deadly, intermediate force, or other excessive force". Amd. Compl. ¶ 41.

She further alleges that EPPD's "practices are so widespread that they constitute a custom that fairly

represents municipal policy". Amd. Compl. ¶ 41. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint highlights ten

incidents in an attempt to show a pattern of excessive force to establish municipal liability. See

Amd. Compl. ¶ 39, 64 - 82. A pattern can be considered an official policy when it is "so common

and well-settled as to constitute a custom that fairly represents municipal policy." Piotrowski v.

City of Houston, 237 F.3d 567, 579 (5th Cir. 2001) (quoting Webster v. City of Houston, 735 F.2d

838, 841 (5th Cir.1984). A single instance of conduct cannot prove that an entity has an

unconstitutional policy. City of Oklahoma City v. Tuttle, 471 U.S. 808, 823-24 (1985).

11. When a plaintiff attempts to use prior incidents to prove a pattern, said incidents "must

have occurred for so long or so frequently that the course of conduct warrants the attribution to the

governing body of knowledge that the objectionable conduct is the expected, accepted practice of

city employees." Webster v. City of Houston, 735 F.2d 838, 842 (5th Cir.), on reh'g, 739 F.2d 993

(5th Cir. 1984). Further, a "pattern requires similarity and specificity". Peterson v. City of Fort

Worth, 588 F.3d, 838, 850. "Prior indications cannot simply be for any and all 'bad' or unwise acts,

but rather must point to the specific violation in question." Estate of Davis ex rel. McCully v. City

of North Richland Hills, 406 F.3d 375, 383 (5th Cir.2005).

12. The United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit has previously addressed the issue of what

constitutes a pattern. In Pineda v. City of Houston, the 5th Circuit held that eleven incidents of

warrantless entry did not support a pattern of unconstitutional warrantless entry. Pineda v. City of

Houston, 291 F.3d 325, 329 n.12 (5th Cir.2002). The court examined the specific context and

circumstances in those eleven incidents and found that officers reported obtaining consent or

exigent circumstance to effect the warrantless entries. Id.

13. In Peterson v. City of Fort Worth, Texas, the Fifth Circuit affirmed the district court when

it found that twenty-seven complaints for excessive force were insufficient to establish a pattern of

excessive force. Peterson v. City of Fort Worth, Tex., 588 F.3d 838, 851 (5th Cir. 2009). In each of

the twenty-seven complaints the defendant city conducted internal investigations. *Id* at 852.

14. Even assuming the truth of the incidents Plaintiff alleges in her Amended Complaint they

do not indicate that the City maintained an officially policy authorizing the use of excessive force.

See Peterson, 588 F.3d at 851. In each of the prior incidents Plaintiffs alleges the involved officers

were brought before a Discipline Review Board ("DRB") and Allen who either took no action

regarding an officers alleged conduct; or in Plaintiffs opinion, took insufficient disciplinary action

against the officer in question. Amd. Compl. ¶ 39, 64 - 82. "[E]ven assuming error in the

unsustained investigations, the record as a whole will not support a legal conclusion that the City

maintained an official policy of condoning excessive force". Peterson, 588 F.3d at 852. The ten

prior incidents mentioned by Plaintiff occurred from 2013 to 2016. Ten incidents over four years

does not reflect a pattern of excessive force.

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- 15. The ten incidents referenced in Plaintiffs Amended Complaint are distinguishable from the allegations she brings against the City and Allen. In all but one of the incidents mentioned in Plaintiffs Amended Complaint, each involved a citizen who was suffering from a mental health crisis or otherwise suffering from a mental illness. The other incident involved a citizen who was suffering a medical emergency. Amd. Compl. ¶ 78. Even citing a single instance of conduct that is factually similar and specific will not prove that the City has an unconstitutional policy. All of the incidents referenced by Plaintiff are factually distinguishable from Plaintiffs allegations. Plaintiff does not assert that she was suffering from a mental illness or mental health crisis. Nor was she suffering from a medical emergency, as Plaintiff states no one was injured in the collision. Amd. Compl. ¶ 22. These incidents are not factually similar, nor specific enough to carry Plaintiffs burden of showing an official policy or custom.
- 16. Plaintiff relies on *Sanchez v. Gomez*, in support of her *Monell* claim. No. EP-17-CV-133 PRM, 2020 WL 1036046, at \*4 (W.D. Tex. Mar. 3, 2020). In *Sanchez*, the plaintiffs *Monell* claim was specifically related to the EPPD's use of force against individuals suffering from mental illness. *Id* at \*4. Again, the facts in *Sanchez* are distinguishable from the allegations contained in Plaintiffs Amended Complaint. In *Sanchez*, the District Court granted the City's Motion for Summary Judgment regarding the plaintiffs *Monell* liability theory that EPPD had a pattern or practice of using excessive force against persons suffering from mental illness. *Id* at \*39. Plaintiffs reliance on *Sanchez* to establish a pattern or practice of excessive force is misplaced as it is not substantially similar to the allegations Plaintiff makes. Plaintiff relies so heavily on the *Sanchez* case that in paragraph 90 of her Amended Complaint she failed to replace the plaintiffs

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name from *Sanchez* with her own when she alleges "Erik's" constitutional rights were violated. *See* Amd. Compl. ¶ 90.

- 17. Plaintiffs' claims for a pattern of excessive force fails as Plaintiff has simply presented legal conclusions presented as a simple formulaic recitation of a *Monell* claim. Therefore, Plaintiff's claim regarding *Monell* liability for excessive use of force fails.
- B. Plaintiff Has Not Plead Any Facts that the City nor Allen Maintained an Inadequate Training and Supervision Policy.
- 18. As part of her *Monell* liability theory, Plaintiff alleges the City and Allen fail to properly train or supervise officers. Amd. Compl. ¶ 40, ¶ 88 b. In order to establish the City's liability for failure to train or supervise, a plaintiff must show (1) the City's training policy or procedure was inadequate; (2) that inadequate training policy was a 'moving force' in causing a violation of plaintiff's rights and (3) the City was deliberately indifferent in adopting its training policy.

  Pineda v. City of Houston, 291 F.3d 325, 331–32 (5th Cir. 2002). For a claim of failure to supervise, a plaintiff must present evidence that it was obvious that "the highly predictable consequence" of not supervising its officers would lead to the violations of constitutional rights of citizens. Peterson, 588 F.3d at 850.
- 19. Plaintiff does not cite to a written policy to support her claim for municipal liability for failure to train and supervise. Plaintiff again highlights the same ten incidents in an attempt to show a pattern of failure to train and supervise to establish municipal liability. Plaintiff's Pleadings regarding the failure to train or supervise constitute only a formulaic recitation of the elements of a putative *Monell* claim. *See* Amd. Compl. ¶ 7, 40, 56, 83, 85, 88b, 89, 90. The United States Supreme Court has said that "...the pleading standard Rule 8 announces does not require "detailed factual allegations," but it demands more than an unadorned, the-defendant-

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unlawfully-harmed-me accusation.... A pleading that offers "labels and conclusions" or "a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do." ... Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders "naked assertion[s]" devoid of "further factual enhancement." *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. This is precisely what the Plaintiff does in her Amended Complaint. Plaintiff again relies on the *Sanchez* case to prove inadequate training. Amd. Compl. ¶ 7. As previously stated, the facts in *Sanchez* are distinguishable as it involved a citizen suffering from a mental illness. In *Sanchez*, the plaintiffs, in their complaint, specifically alleged how the officers were inadequately trained to interact with mentally ill individuals. *Sanchez v. Gomez*, 283 F. Supp. 3d 524, 545 (W.D. Tex. 2017). Here, Plaintiff does not offer any facts to show how officers are inadequately trained or supervised.

20. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint offers only conclusory statements regarding training and supervision of officers. "[W]here the well-pleaded facts do not permit the court to infer more than the mere possibility of misconduct, the complaint has alleged—but it has not "show[n]"— "that the pleader is entitled to relief." *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679. "The description of a policy or custom and its relationship to the underlying constitutional violation, moreover, cannot be conclusory; it must contain specific facts." *Spiller v. City of Tex. City*, 130 F.3d 162, 167 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997). Plaintiff's claim regarding training and supervision fails to provide any facts to support this assertion. Plaintiff makes the conclusory allegation that all of these things are so. *See* Amd. Compl. ¶7, 40, 56, 83, 85, 88 – 90. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint contains no facts about the City's training or supervision policies, or how they are defective. Plaintiff does not allege any pattern of complaints by other citizens about these officers, or that complaints have not been investigated, if and when any may have been made. Plaintiff also has not presented factual allegations about deliberate indifference in

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adopting the policies. Absent these kinds of allegations, Plaintiff fails to state a claim. *Piotrowski* v. *City of Houston*, 237 F.3d 567, 581-82 (5th Cir. 2001); *Pineda* v. *City of Houston*, 124 F.Supp.2d 1057, (S.D.Tex. 2000); *Peterson* v. *City of Fort Worth*,588 F.3d 838 (5th Cir. 2009). Finally, there are no factual allegations to show that the alleged inadequate policies were the driving force behind Plaintiff's alleged constitutional rights, therefore, this claim fails.

- C. Plaintiff has Not Plead Any Facts that the City or Allen Failed to Investigate or Discipline its Officers.
- 21. Plaintiff attempts to plead a pattern of failure to investigate and discipline by highlighting the same ten incidents. Amd. Compl. ¶39, 64 82. "[A] City policy of inadequate officer discipline could be unconstitutional if it was pursued with deliberate indifference toward the constitutional rights of citizens." *Piotrowski*, 237 F.3d at 581. As previously stated, in order to prove a pattern, they "must have occurred for so long or so frequently that the course of conduct warrants the attribution to the governing body of knowledge that the objectionable conduct is the expected, accepted practice of city employees." *Webster*, 735 F.2d at 842. Said pattern "requires similarity and specificity". *Peterson* at 850.
- 22. The ten referenced incidents are distinguishable from Plaintiffs allegations for failure to investigate and discipline. These incidents are factually distinguishable from Plaintiffs allegations. Plaintiff does not assert that she was suffering from a mental illness or mental health crisis. These incidents are not substantially similar, nor specific enough to carry Plaintiffs burden of showing an official policy or custom. As previously stated, even if Plaintiff cited a single instance of conduct that is factually similar and specific to her allegations, that will still not prove that the City has an unconstitutional policy.

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23. The 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit has held that "an isolated decision not to discipline an officer after a single

episode of illegality could not itself supply the causal link." Webster, 735 F.2d at 851. Further, that

"single decision did not show a policy or custom authorizing or encouraging police misconduct

through a persistent failure to discipline offending officers." *Id.* For a city to be held liable plaintiff

is required to identify a "causal connection between some action or inaction by the city and the

asserted constitutional deprivation.". Webster, 735 F.2d at 850.

24. The 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit also addressed the requisite proof to claim a policy of inadequate

investigation and discipline. In Piotrowski v. City of Houston, the court reasoned that one way in

which a plaintiff might prove a discipline was pursued with deliberate indifference was a "purely

formalistic investigation in which little evidence was taken, the file was bare, and the conclusions

of the investigator were perfunctory." Piotrowski v. City of Houston, 237 F.3d 567, 582(5th Cir.

2001). Plaintiff presents no such evidence here. Plaintiff acknowledged that Officer Frank was

investigated by Internal Affairs and disciplined as a result of this incident, albeit, not to her

satisfaction. Amd. Compl. ¶ 9. She also states that Officer Meise, the other officer involved in this

incident, was investigated but not disciplined. Amd. Compl. ¶ 9.

25. Regardless if Plaintiff agrees or disagrees with the end result of the Internal Affairs

investigation, Plaintiff has failed to plead any "systematic inattention to [her] complaints."

Piotrowski, 237 F.3d at 582. Lastly, Plaintiff failed to allege any other complaints made against

officers Frank and Meise, nor any complaints made against Frank or Meiase by other citizens.

Plaintiff's claims for failure to investigate and discipline are merely legal conclusions using prior

factually distinguishable instances of conduct, therefore, this claim fails.

D. Plaintiff's other Monnell Claims Fail to State a Claim Upon which Relief can be

Granted and Lack the Requisite Causation Requirement.

26. First, Plaintiffs claim regarding the City's alleged failure to provide body-worn cameras

fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Plaintiff blithely states that the City

consciously chose to be the largest city in Texas without having issued body worn cameras to its

officers. Amd. Compl. ¶ 8. The source of this allegation is not apparent from Plaintiffs pleading.

However, Plaintiff also acknowledges that the City has approved a measure to issue body worn

cameras to its officers. Amd. Compl. ¶ 37. Plaintiff claim fails as she offers no evidence that the

lack of body worn cameras was the direct cause of her alleged injuries. There is no legal requirement

for the City to issue body worn cameras to all of its officers. Further, body worn cameras are not

mandated by the Constitution or laws of the United States. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint contains

no factual allegations that attribute the alleged failure to provide body worn cameras to Allen or the

City. Further, there are no factual allegations to show that the alleged inadequate body worn camera

policy was the driving force behind Plaintiff's alleged constitutional right violation, therefore, this

claim fails.

27. Next, Plaintiffs claim regarding the City and Allen's failure to classify officer-involved

shootings as unjustified has no relevance to Plaintiffs allegations as they do not involve the

discharge of a firearm. Plaintiff cannot prove that any such alleged policy or custom was the

"moving force" or direct cause of her alleged injury. Monell, 436 U.S. at 694. "[T]here must be a

direct causal link between the municipal policy and the constitutional deprivation". Piotrowski v.

City of Houston, 237 F.3d 567, 580 (5th Cir. 2001). In her Amended Complaint Plaintiff alleges

that Officer Jared Frank used his leg to sweep Plaintiff off her feet causing her to strike the ground.

Amd. Compl. ¶ 29. She further alleges Officer Meise held her shoulder while Officer Frank struck

her with his hands. Amd. Compl. ¶ 30. Plaintiff has not pleaded any facts that an alleged policy or

custom relating to the classification of officer-involved shootings was the direct cause of her injury.

Plaintiff presents no factual allegations that the officers involved in this incident even discharged

their firearms, therefore, this claim fails.

28. Plaintiffs claim regarding the City's alleged failure to provide a means to collect monetary

damages for excessive force claims fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Plaintiff

provides no legal authority that would provide a legal basis for such a claim and her only mention

of said claim comes from paragraph 88(g) of her Amended Complaint. See Amd. Compl. ¶ 88.

Plaintiff does not plead any facts in support of this claim. Further, such procedure is not mandated

by the Constitution or laws of the United States. Claims for excessive force are sufficiently

protected under 42 U.S.C. §1983. Plaintiff has not pleaded any facts that the lack of said procedure

or policy was the direct cause of her injury, therefore, this claim fails.

29. Next, although not specifically plead as a cause of action, Plaintiff states the City's does not

require insurance or other indemnification for alleged Constitutional and civil right violations. See

Amd. Compl. ¶ 40. Plaintiff alleges that this actively discourages litigants and attorneys from filing

lawsuits. Amd. Compl. ¶ 40. Nothing in 42 U.S.C. §1983 obligates the City to indemnify or require

insurance of its police officers for alleged constitutional or civil rights violations. There is no

respondeat superior liability under §1983. Monell, 436 U.S. at 694. As such, the City is not

vicariously liable for its employees and need not indemnify them from alleged torts. Further,

Plaintiff pleads no factual allegations to show that a lack of insurance or other indemnity agreements

were the driving force behind Plaintiff's alleged constitutional right violation.

30. Lastly, paragraph 88 (h) of Plaintiffs Amended Complaint brings an additional *Monell* claim

regarding the City's failure to provide for a means to financially compensate for civil rights

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violations. This added claim is duplicative of the previous allegation contained in paragraph 88(g)

of Plaintiffs Amended Complaint. Plaintiff does not plead any facts in support of this claim. Such

a procedure is not mandated by the Constitution or laws of the United States. Claims for excessive

force are sufficiently protected under 42 U.S.C. §1983. Plaintiff has not pleaded any facts that the

lack of said procedure or policy was the direct cause of her injury, therefore, this claim fails.

E. Duplicity of Claims Against Municipal Entity and Municipal Employee in Individual

Capacity.

31. Plaintiff brings this suit against Allen is in his individual capacity. Amd. Compl. ¶ 5.

However, Plaintiff asserts no independent claim against Allen personally. Instead, Plaintiff's

Monnell claim asserts that Allen, along with the Mayor and City Council for the City of El Paso,

are policymakers Amd. Compl. ¶ 88. Plaintiffs Monell claims against the City are intertwined with

her claims against Allen. Plaintiff's allegations against Allen fail to state a claim upon which relief

can be granted, because she has not pleaded any facts to show Allen took any specific action against

her or that Allen's individual actions caused a violation of her constitutional rights.

32. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint does not allege that Allen was personally involved in any

way outside of his capacity as an agent of Defendant City. Therefore, Plaintiff claim is really a suit

against Allen in his officially capacity as the Chief of the City of El Paso Police Department.

Official capacity suits "generally represent only another way of pleading an action against an entity

of which an officer is an agent." Monell, 436 U.S. at 690 n.55. "It is well-established that courts

may dismiss claims against individuals in their official capacity, in favor of claims against their

employing entity, where the official-capacity claims 'duplicate claims against the respective

governmental entities themselves." Doe v. Burleson Cnty., No. 1:20-CV-126-SH, 2021 WL

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4267894, at \*2 (W.D. Tex. Aug. 27, 2021) (quoting Castro Romero v. Becken, 256 F.3d 349, 355

(5th Cir. 2001)).

33. Here, Plaintiff's claim against Defendant Allen are really claims against him in his official

capacity, as an agent of Defendant City. The claims against Allen are identical to her claims against

Defendant City. As the City is a named party in this cause the Court should dismiss Allen from this

suit with prejudice, because Plaintiffs claim is duplicative of Plaintiff's claims against Defendant

City.

III. **CONCLUSION** 

34. Plaintiff has failed to allege any facts, which demonstrate a City policy, custom, or practice

that are sufficient to nudge her allegations across the line from conceivable to plausible. Plaintiff's

attempt to plead a §1983 claim for municipal liability fails to state a claim upon which relief can be

granted. Plaintiff fails to allege facts that would demonstrate a City policy that authorizes the types

of excessive force alleged by Plaintiff and connect that policy to Plaintiff's alleged injury.

Plaintiff's Claims regarding failure to train and supervise, failure to classify officer-involved

shootings as unjustified, failure to implement body worn-cameras and failing to provide a means to

collect on excessive force claims also lack sufficient factual information to nudge the Plaintiff's

claims past the point of conceivable into the realm of probable, and thus are not able to survive a

motion to dismiss. All of Plaintiff's allegations regarding municipal liability are insufficient to

withstand a motion to dismiss because they are mere legal conclusions lacking factual specificity,

and constitute only a formulaic recitation of the elements of a *Monell* cause.

IV. **PRAYER** 

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WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Defendants City and Allen respectfully requests that this Honorable Court grant City's Motion to Dismiss all of Plaintiff's claims against City and Allen, and enter an order dismissing all of Plaintiff's claims against the City and Allen with prejudice and grant all other relief to which they are entitled.

Respectfully submitted,

KARLA M. NIEMAN, City Attorney State Bar No. 24048542

P.O. Box 1890 El Paso, Texas 79950-1890

Tel: 915-212-0033 Fax: 915-212-0034

/s/Mathew Engelbaum
Mathew J. Engelbaum
Assistant City Attorney
State Bar No.: 24097653

EngelbaumMJ@elpasotexas.gov

Attorneys for Plaintiff

Phone: (915) 212-0033 Fax: (915) 212-0034

Attorneys for Defendants the City of El Paso and

Gregory K. Allen

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on September 19, 2022 a true and correct copy of the foregoing was e-filed with the Clerk of this Court using the CM/ECF system and that a courtesy copy was forwarded to:

Randall L. Kallinen Kallinen Law PLLC 511 Broadway Street Houston, Texas 77012

Date: September 19, 2022.

Telephone: (713) 320-3785

Email: attorneyKallinen@aol.com

Alexander C. Johnson

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21-1026-11816.001/Doc. No.: 1198267 City's Rule 12(b)6 Motion to Dismiss Kallinen Law PLLC 511 Broadway Street Houston, Texas 77012 Telephone: (573) 340-3316

Email: alex@acj.legal

Jim Darnell, P.C. 310 N. Mesa, Suite 212 El Paso, Texas 79901 Telephone: 915-532-2442 Email: jdarnell@jdarnell.com

Jeep Darnell 310 N. Mesa, Suite 212 El Paso, Texas 79901 Telephone: 915-532-2442

Email: jedarnell@jdarnell.com

Cris Estrada

310 N. Mesa, Suite 212 El Paso, Texas 79901 Telephone: 915-532-2442 Email: cestrada@jdarnell.com Attorneys for Jared Frank

/s/Mathew Engelbaum

Mathew J. Engelbaum

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